

*Speeches*  
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ECONOMIC JUSTICE IN A DEMOCRACY  
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America is experiencing growing pains in her approach to democratic maturity. Self styled the last bulwark of democracy, her great concern today is with the acknowledged fact that current attainments fall so short of actual democracy that, with the rest of the democratic World, America now greatly fears the competition being presented by other ideologies. It is this uncertainty, the insecurity that is creating much greater awareness on the part of the general public in America to a degree that in the past has been seen only in periods of great crisis.

This awareness has led to the drawing of sharp lines of cleavages in many instances and the muddled confusion of indecision in others. It is the picture of conflict on many fronts as an expression of the interests of a free people being wrestled out in open debate as a part of the evolutionary process.

These signs of conflict are signs of health.

Competition between differing points of view and the controversy which is so evident in our society today, are both the expression of interest and the factors which create interest both indicating a broadening awareness of the people in the issues of the day and both representing the antithesis of lethargy and self-satisfaction which are democracy's most insidious poisons.

The conflicts of today in which the people of our Nation are embroiled include many types. There is that constant battle being waged between management and labor with each attempting to curtail or delimit the power wielded by the other. During the course of years that this conflict has been waged, we have seen the pendulum swing from the extreme of complete management control and the operation of the policy of laissez faire to the other extreme of inordinate power wielded by

at least some branches of organized labor. In keeping with the frailties of human nature, it has been disclosed that either extreme presents grave danger to the general public and we now see an attempt to pull the pendulum back to the side of management as evidenced in the Taft Hartley Law.

There is the social-political conflict which ostensibly is declared to be on the front of states' rights versus federal control. Actually, this is a form of strife which is a struggle for dominance between the old line political control on the one hand and on the other, those forces who see the science of government as something which must have greater meaning to the little man in the streets. Even though the battle cry is declared to be states rights, we know that the real issue involved is whether private enterprise shall be given a completely free hand in its exploitation of miseries of the little people or whether such enterprise shall retain its freedom only through wise restraint and regulation by government. We know that this issue touches upon the problems of housing, of employment, of education, of Civil Rights and that any mention of control of these areas which have been flagrantly neglected by so many states, is countered by charges of Socialism and Communism.

The conflict between internationalists and isolationists, while not so obvious today, never-the-less is inherent in many of the differences of opinion which exist. The complexion of many of our domestic problems is being shaded by influences arising out of this conflict.

As we contemplate the several battle lines that have been and are being drawn, we will meet several types of negative reactions. There are those who show signs of uneasiness and fear because of sensitiveness to the clamor and the claims of the opposition. These are they who are thrown into fits of depression by the antics of the Barkins, the Coxes and the Talmadges; who see in the actions of the Dixierats the loss to America of the whole ideal of Democracy. Then there are those who take on the cloak of cynicism to hide their own lethargy, indecision, or inadequacy. If one is unwilling or unable to play an important part on the team,

he derives cynical satisfaction by laying his bets against the team.

On the other hand, there are those sensible far-sighted persons who see today's conflicts in the total perspective of history, whose uneasiness or fear will relate only to the question of whether or not they are making a full contribution toward the swaying tide of battle. There are those who are optimistic through their faith in the basic decency of the average human being when enlightened and aroused and those who are realistic in facing the current issues, in clarifying their own opinions, and by word and action infecting those with whom they are in contact with a like spirit of purposeful optimism. The wide-spread and heated discussion which characterizes these several realms of controversy will serve their healthy purpose only in so far as they will be successful in pulling many more of us from the side-lines, out of our ivory towers, away from our cynic's bench. It will mean the development of the kind of awareness that in turn spells the strengthening of democracy and the earlier realization of the objectives of the World's common people.

Of deepest significance in this whole broad conflict between the various shadings of socio-political philosophy is the issue of Civil Rights. This issue is hotly contested because it cuts across everyone of the several specific areas of conflict mentioned. It is a matter that deals with the basic spirit of democracy in a day in the World's evolutionary growth when the great mass of common peoples are contending for a place in the Sun. It is the main pivot upon which each of the conflicting ideologies is hinged. The ultimate choice of the form of government to be selected by black people, yellow people, brown people, white people, all over the Globe, will rest upon their understanding of that form of government which will guarantee to them their place in the Sun. Whether it be the iron curtain of Communism, the one-way window pane of American Democracy, or the peep-hole of Facism, the little people of the World are insisting upon their right to see what lies beyond.

In the history of labor-management relations, the clamor of the common people has forced the evolutionary development from the earlier conflict between the slave state and free labor; between white organized labor and black strike-breakers as a result of management's exploitations; between an unrestrained system of free enterprise and a system that imposed restraints because of labor organizations; between a system that permitted the free exploitation of racial, religious and cultural groups as a means of maintaining a stranglehold on all of labor. Basic in the whole conflict between labor and management has been the issue of the protection of the Civil Rights of individuals.

As indicated previously, the so-called states' rights issue basically is one of Civil Rights of individuals. Those who today so vigorously defend states' rights against regulatory power exerted by the federal government, presume to base their arguments upon the dangerous and centralized control as an avenue toward totalitarianism. To them, there is no mid-ground between complete federal disinterest in the welfare of the common people on the one extreme or the complete domination by the federal government in the pursuit of such interest on the other. Actually, we know that the articulate proponents of states' rights are defending that undemocratic system which through organized fear-propaganda, has permitted complete political and economic control. They and we recognize that by virtue of the controls that have been gained through these methods, they exert inordinate power in national affairs. They and we recognize that the form of oligarchy maintained by the advocates of states' rights is a form of totalitarianism, of Fascist totalitarianism equal to anything existing in either hemisphere today. The protected right of an individual to cast his ballot for the official who would represent him, means the death of Jim Crow terrorism and the more flagrant forms of discrimination. Each of these touches directly upon the Civil Rights of human beings.

In the issues of housing and education, again the ostensible fight is in the area of states' rights. Actually, it means that the common people recognize that the strength of our democracy will be measured by the literacy and the physical

and mental health of the people who are its citizens. The opposition knows, however, that a strong people and an intelligent people will not remain enslaved. Civil Rights to the common people, as reflected in decent housing, and educational facilities, would mean the loss of political and economic control to those now in power.

As a result of the clamor arising from the current controversies, more and more American citizens, hitherto disinterested or misinformed are seeing the real, rather than the purported issues. That awareness in turn is creating a wider degree of understanding among the rank and file than ever has existed in American life. Through this understanding, the lines are being drawn and the teams are being formed. We, in America, today stand upon the threshold of a fuller life. To enter the portals will mean the realization of democracy in a fuller sense. To permit fear pessimism or cynicism to halt the step is to permit the shutting of the door to social progress.

The attitude of the reactionary element in American society today can be likened to the frantic counter-attack of a beaten German Army in the Battle of the Bulge. Or, there is the more dangerous possibility of its being compared with the fierce determination of the Russians at Stalingrad. We know that it is a last ditch stand of a desperate people who can envisage the loss of the advantages of the great power and prestige which has been theirs. How the campaign shall be resolved will depend upon the forces which are represented on our team and upon the use of all such forces to the attainment of the common objective.

It would be too elementary in a group such as this to discuss in detail all of the aspects of the fight for Civil Rights. We know the evil results of the poll tax but we also realize that outlawing this practice will be only one small step toward full political emancipation of more than ten million black and white Americans. We here are painfully cognizant of the long range evil effects,

of discrimination in educational and in housing facilities. We are fully aware of the demoralizing influence of segregation and discrimination in all phases of American life, including that to be found in the Armed Forces. There is not one of us who has not had some unhappy experience with the general practice of employment discrimination. It is needless therefore to recite the many ills inflicted upon society through the abrogation of Civil Rights.

It would seem to be much more constructive to consider what means are at our disposal now, what prospects are in store for us, what techniques are best designed to achieve full Civil Rights protections in all these fields.

But first, what actually is the root of the problem for which we seek solution? That which confronts us is a deep-seated national habit--a bad habit frequently mis-called tradition. It has a deep emotional base, founded upon fear that rests in the hearts of many people; fears which have been created in the hearts of many by those who in cold blood create them for purposes of exploitation. This fear is contagious, particularly where there is an absence of all enlightenment and understanding. In other words, we find ourselves in an atmosphere in which a truly frightened minority of emotionally disturbed white Americans have played upon the ignorance of the great majority, indoctrinating them with like fears. Even in some so-called liberal circles can be seen the shadow of this fear which follows the vague outline that economic and political equality denote social equality; this in turn invites association to be followed inevitably by inter-marriage and mongrelization. However unsound these arguments or relatively unimportant the results, the irrationality is the very substance of which fears are created.

It is the complexity of these factors which make the problem and the emotional nature of all opposition to any solution. It is this complexity in turn which suggests that no single instrument can be devised that will be adequate in the changing of these attitudes. Conservative conciliation alone will not suffice. Education, whatever its current connotation, alone cannot accomplish the task. Militant pressure group techniques alone will not attain the objective. Punitive



legislation alone cannot force the issue. Civil disobedience alone will be fruitless. Perhaps the greatest weakness of the progressive forces in American life has been the tendency of the advocates of one or another of the several attack methods mentioned to insist that theirs was the only effective weapon. I submit that all of these techniques must be employed and that the real hope for success in the fight for Civil Liberties and Civil Rights will lie in the ability of the progressive forces to achieve some degree of coordination between the many methods available.

It means that the conservatives must leave to the so-called radicals their functions in advocating mass pressure techniques. There has been an essential role wherever the history of mankind has shown marked change for the better. Cooperate with those who rely upon education and conciliation. Their functions are essential in the bringing of light to those who are in darkness. Aid every effort to create protective legal devices. The doubters, the fearful, and the uncertain need the strengthening influence which legal sanctions provide. As long as sincerity and clarity of vision are present differences in techniques should not be permitted to interfere with at least minimum coordination.

It will be said that such a proposal is pure hog-wash -- impractical theory. I submit that in one of several states, New Jersey, this type of coordinated attack is achieving results far beyond the wildest hopes of those who have been in the progressive army during past years. As you may know New Jersey and New York are pioneers in the field of fair employment legislation, both initiating this work in July of 1945. While the initial purpose of the Anti Discrimination Law in New Jersey was that of eliminating the evil practice of employment discrimination, the Legislature empowered the Division Against Discrimination to function in other areas of Civil Rights. The act of enforcing the fair employment features of the law has proven to be the most effective educational medium thus far discovered. Although the Law has adequate enforcement powers, it has been unnecessary to call upon these powers in three years of operation. Instead of regulation by police power, the results being obtained, are through compulsory education.

(Cite specific cases.)

In addition to the enforcement features of the Law as characterized in case handling procedures, there is the educational emphasis. By virtue of our connection with the State Department of Education, we have entree to all functions in public education in the State. Through a State-wide Committee of Educators, critical examination is being made of text books, teaching practices, teacher preparation, and other factors that may be influencing the attitudes of young America. Through the authority conferred by the adoption of our new State Charter, the long standing tradition of Jim Crow in education has been successfully challenged. Although without the jurisdiction of the State law, private hospitals throughout the State are being caused to change long-standing policies of discrimination. These and many other advances, too numerous to mention, are occurring with breath-taking regularity.

I do not mean to imply that they are occurring directly and solely as a result of the operations of the Division Against Discrimination. I do state that these things are occurring because of the mobilizing and coordinating influence of the Division. The governing body of the Division is the State Council Against Discrimination, a group of seven non-salaried citizens. This body in turn has created similar councils in nine counties of the State, each having in the neighborhood of twenty-five responsible citizens of the respective counties. Membership on these groups has been chosen from the progressives on the left to the conservatives on the right. However, much or little these individuals have understood of the real problem they elected to tackle, each is being exposed to a degree of understanding which only few of them had been able to obtain. Programs have been devised that have enabled them to walk together at a tempered pace which neither carried the conservative too fast or the progressive too slowly. There has been the task of learning to have sufficient respect for the conviction of the other that all may work with a minimum of discord and a maximum of results.

In addition to this official family, organization efforts to maintain effective liaison between the frequently competing and embattled progressive organizations have met with great success. The adoption of section five in the



Bill of Rights of the new State Charter was made possible only because of the coordinated support to the measure given by all the progressive forces in the State. It is this chapter which prohibits segregation or discrimination in the public schools, in the State Militia and prohibits discrimination in the enjoyment of any Civil Right. It is because of this same coordination of forces in the State of New Jersey that we feel confident that our State will provide another legal instrument that will aid the fight for Civil Rights. Like many other states north of the Mason Dixon line, New Jersey has had a so-called Civil Rights Law which, for many obvious reasons has been ineffective in eliminating racial discrimination in the use of public facilities. Assembly Bill #818, now pending before the State Legislature, while leaving the present Civil Rights Bill undisturbed, would add the Division Against Discrimination with authority to accept and process complaints where the Civil Rights of individuals have been denied. The authority conferred would require investigation and conciliation as in the present fair employment measure. The further authority is given that would require public hearing, issuance of cease and desist order and prosecution for violation of this order in all Civil Rights cases. This Law, if enacted, will mean that the State, officially, will have charged itself with the full responsibility for protecting the right of the individual without demanding of that individual the sacrifices which existing Civil Rights Laws exact of him.

In this overall approach to the problem in New Jersey, there have been several instances where we have given cooperation to so-called radical groups whose activities have been fitted into the overall attack. We have served as a mobilizing influence as between the many dissident elements who shared a common interest in the rights of the people. We have brought to influential, though disinterested people, the type of education which hitherto they have been able to escape. Our Law makes their reception of education compulsory. We have been able to reach the great body of intellectual liberals whose reservations were so many that progressives, rather universally had been contemptuous of their potential value. Respectability, as symbolized by the entrance of the State into this

controversial realm was sufficient to safe-guard their personal interest. The very effectiveness of the Anti Discrimination Law, has made the champions of Civil Rights much more aware of the political implications in this problem than previously they were willing to recognise.